

Aragon Research

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Topics: Social Software

Issues: How will Social Software technologies evolve?

Who are the Social Software providers and how will they navigate a crowded market?

Oracle Goes Social and Mobile

Summary: On October 5th, Oracle announced Oracle Social Network, which represents its entry into the enterprise social networking market. Oracle demonstrated this offering working on tablet devices.

Event: At Oracle OpenWorld 2011 in San Francisco, CEO Larry Ellison announced Oracle Social Network and Oracle Public Cloud, both of which start to become available (on a limited basis) in the next few weeks. Pricing was not announced.

Analysis: Oracle has made numerous attempts to enter the Collaboration market over the years and its latest offering, Oracle Social Network, appears to leverage some of those previous investments (e.g. Beehive and Oracle Web Conferencing). Oracle Social Network has a simple, pleasant looking user interface and it can be configured to work seamlessly with other Oracle Fusion Applications (CRM, HCM) that Oracle offers.

Within the Social Network product offering, Oracle is introducing built-in Presence for IM/Chat, as well as Web Conferencing. Oracle's Social Network design featured a clever way to summarize conversations that are part of an activity stream, reminiscent of Facebook's UI.

For many enterprises, presence will be a strategic part of its overall workplace collaboration efforts.

Additionally, Oracle demonstrated that its new offerings will work on mobile devices including Apple and Google Android based tablets. As with its Browser User Interface (UI), the Tablet UI was modern and easy to navigate similar to a Twitter-style mobile interaction.

Aragon Research believes that many application software providers are going to enter the social networking arena, mainly to extend the stickiness of their applications and to capitalize on the growing popularity of Social Networking in the enterprise. The attractiveness of what Oracle is doing is that it can go beyond just a CRM focus, and offer a social layer in other application areas, such as Human Capital Management and Talent Suites. Oracle will also be able to leverage its extensive BPM capabilities to allow for workflow approvals to be part of the Activity Stream experience.

In the workplace arena, Oracle now can offer enterprises a full set of workplace capabilities through Oracle WebCenter, which includes Portal, Web Experience Management (WEM), Content Management and now Collaboration. The biggest issue previously with its efforts in this area was the failure to attract customers to adopt Collaboration offerings, but the success

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Oracle is having with Oracle WebCenter in the Portal, WEM and ECM areas should help it with its renewed focus on Collaboration.

Oracle did not share specifics on pricing or the specifics on availability for Oracle Social Network or for Oracle Public Cloud, which Oracle Social Network will be offered on. Oracle has had large data centers for years and will be leveraging these for its Public Cloud offering.

Aragon Advisory: Enterprises that use applications from Oracle, such as Content Management, Portal, CRM, HCM/Talent will want to evaluate Oracle Social Network, in part because of its way of seamlessly adding Social capabilities to those Suites. In the past, Oracle has not always executed in the Collaboration arena, partly due to a lack of Sales focus. With the overlay Sales teams in place for Oracle WebCenter, we expect to see more focus on a global basis.